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DIRECTORATE OF  
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South Vietnam: Some key opponents of the Thieu government are again trying to organize an antiregime coalition.

Senator Tran Van Don, one of the government's most prominent and persistent critics, has announced the creation of a voting bloc in the National Assembly. He probably hopes that it will serve as the basis of a large political movement committed to support his own political ambitions. Don must run for re-election to the Upper House this fall, and he is probably also looking toward the 1971 presidential elections.

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More effective political opposition to President Thieu has been prevented so far by the chronic failure of South Vietnam's numerous rival groups to subordinate parochial interests and rally around a leader acceptable to all. Don's initiative will

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only be successful to the degree that he can persuade the other opposition leaders that they can achieve power through cooperation and that he has the best qualifications for providing the necessary leadership. These traditional political jealousies, however, are well ingrained and will be difficult to overcome.

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Romania - Warsaw Pact: Bucharest is weighing its obligations as a member of the Warsaw Pact against its desire to minimize its participation.

In a conversation with Ambassador Meeker in late December, Romanian Premier Maurer said that the question of hosting Warsaw Pact maneuvers or participating in maneuvers outside of Romania was still an issue between Bucharest and its allies. This has been a contentious issue in the past, and the Romanians have been especially stubborn about it since the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Romania has not hosted Pact exercises since 1962, and in the last two years has limited its participation in such maneuvers to token forces and observers.

Maurer stressed that "pressure" was an exaggerated description of Moscow's efforts to increase Romanian involvement in the Pact. He explained that there are forces in the Pact, as in NATO, working to strengthen it militarily. Romania, he contended, "is actually working in the other direction," but he said that its geopolitical position dictates a "realistic course." He stressed that if Pact exercises are held in Romania, they would be carefully limited and controlled to insure the prompt departure of foreign forces.

Maurer made clear that Romania's intense interest in a European security conference stems from the hope that an atmosphere of detente will deter the Soviets from intervention in Romania.

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Czechoslovakia: Czechoslovak security forces conducted a large roundup of "criminal elements" on the night of 14 January.

A total of 18,152 persons were reported checked and 2,502 places searched by security forces in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia. One hundred eighteen persons were placed under immediate arrest. Between 1,740 and 2,172 persons were apprehended for punishable offenses, including 111 wanted for previous offenses, 149 charged with being "parasites," 98 as having engaged in various criminal activities, 615 as "perpetrators of punishable offenses," and 843 for misdemeanors. Over 300 persons in Prague were brought before the authorities and 232 were detained. Goods reportedly valued at \$24,000 were also seized.

In Slovakia, police announced the arrest of an unspecified number of persons for attempting to gain access to classified state secrets, linking them with a "spy center" in Austria.

These actions are obviously designed to intimidate the populace and to curb potential as well as actual dissidence. They probably are also part of police efforts to discourage demonstrations on the first anniversary this week of student Jan Palach's self-immolation protesting the Soviet occupation and the erosion of the Dubcek reforms. This is the third such police roundup under the Husak regime since it came to power in April 1969.

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Portugal: Prime Minister Caetano's cabinet changes announced this week strengthen his position and may be intended to permit movement toward reforms opposed by supporters of former Premier Salazar.

Caetano reduced the number of portfolios from 15 to ten by abolishing the post of minister of state and merging several others, for example, putting the Army Ministry under Defense. New ministers were appointed for Foreign Affairs, Education, and the newly merged Ministries of Corporations - Social Security and Health - Public Assistance. Some nine changes were made at the subcabinet level, continuing Caetano's tendency to appoint younger technicians favorable to his policies.

The retention of Minister of Interior Goncalves Rapazote can be considered a concession to right wing forces centering around President Thomaz. This indicates that Caetano could not get his way completely in the reshuffle. Another problem will be grumbling among high ranking army officers as a result of the downgrading of their ministry in relation to the navy.

This consolidation of strength will put Caetano in a better position to undertake further administrative, economic, and social reforms, including perhaps a change in the presidential system itself.

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Libya: The military Revolutionary Command Council is tightening its control of the government. Junta leader Qaddafi yesterday was named prime minister, replacing a civilian. In addition to personally assuming the portfolio for defense, Qaddafi named four other council members to key posts in the cabinet, including the Ministry of Interior. The remainder of the cabinet posts are held by civilians, some of whom were members of the previous government. By assuming control of the operations of government as well as its policies, Qaddafi and his associates have removed what latent opposition there was to their pro-Egyptian policies, enabling Libya to follow an even more pro-Nasir line.

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Peru: Recent mining regulations aimed at accelerating development of unexploited concessions have elicited a large initial response. Mining companies filed almost 900 development schedules before the deadline of 31 December. At least seven by major US firms involve potential investment totalling approximately \$1 billion over the next five years. This action allows the companies to avoid the loss of their concessions while providing at least an additional 90 days to make investment decisions. Under the mining decree work must be started on the concessions by 1 April. The minister of mines reportedly has announced that a \$330 million contract for one of the above proposals is about to be signed.

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International Communism: The mid-January meeting of 28 European Communist parties in Moscow reportedly heard a Soviet suggestion to convoke a popular front congress to discuss European Security issues, probably as part of the campaign for a European security conference this year. The Soviet initiative probably stems from a mandate given at last year's world conference to prepare a world anti-imperialist congress. This was later expanded by Brezhnev to include a separate "congress of peoples in defense of European security."

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